243 While crops are small, posts are placed in the fields to provide perching places for hawks.

Worms may damage small plants to the point that reseeding is necessary, especially if there are long periods of cloudy weather without rain. Worms also damage about 35 percent of the ears. Deer damage crops badly only in isolated mountain fields. Badgers in some places are serious pests. The only remedy is to attempt to shoot the animals. Birds do little damage. Some maize is attacked by a fun-
[262] gus. The fungus is eaten, but it is not sold or prized as a delicacy as is the case in some parts of Mexico.

243 Trespass by domestic animals and theft must
672 be guarded against. Sometimes isolated fields
685 are completely stripped if not watched. Stray animals caught damaging corn are taken to the *municipio* and held in jail until the owner pays for the damage.

243 Unseasonal frost often damages corn, par-
[132] ticularly late plantings and in fields at high altitudes. In 1940, frost, heavy enough to damage some fields, occurred on September 29.

When maize is about 1 foot high it is cultivated (*"escorda"* also *"trozando"*) by running the plow between the rows, throwing dirt toward the plants. This is done a second time when the plants are about 18 inches tall. If it is delayed too long, the roots may be cut, the maize leaves will yellow at the tip, and no ears will form.

When the maize is in tassel, after the rainy season is well underway, the fields are weeded
[412] *"chaponeado."* This is done by hand with a short machete, called *"os,"* with a sharp curve at the point. Also, earth is piled around such plants as were not sufficiently covered by the cultivation. If the weeds are bad, a second weeding is sometimes done, but not often. If weeding is omitted, weeds climb high up the stalks and the crop suffers considerably. The weeds removed are piled up beside the fields and are not used for feed or fertilizer.

243 As soon as grain is well formed on the ears,
221 some maize is used for food, usually roasted.
674 At this time, also, guards must be set in the fields, not only to keep animals out, but to prevent theft. Whole families may move to temporary field shelters at this time and remain until the harvest. In the "plains," usually

632 before the judge. In such cases he may dis-
693 cover falsified documents, and will levy fines against the guilty party. Disputes over land ownership may come before him also and usually will be settled without reference to higher authorities. An example of the latter type of case occurred where a person occupied lands belonging to Aurelio Ceja S., which the latter had registered for 20 years. The intruder was
[685] sentenced to return the land, pay the owner 10
[691] percent of the value, and all costs of the litigation.

The judge receives no pay, but he is assisted by a secretary who is paid $1 a day by the *municipio*. The secretary may collect fees for preparing private documents. More detail on judicial cases will be given later.

625 *Police.*—Two (later three) men were em-
632 ployed as police in 1940-41. Their main duties were not actually police functions, however, but rather the running of errands and carrying messages for the mayor, *síndico*, and judge. Most real police functions are carried out by the *síndico*, *veedor*, and the *ronda*. The police receive 75 centavos daily; all are persons incapacitated in some way for heavy work.

Comisionados.—There are many kinds and
632 classes of *comisionados*. Perhaps most impor-
624 tant are the four *barrio* chiefs, the *jefes de cuartel*, appointed by the mayor each year. These men, together with the previous officials, are exempt from any other service during their year of office. The *barrio* chief commands the block chiefs and also the *ronda*. He transmits instructions of the *ayuntamiento* to the block chiefs when necessary.

The block chiefs are also appointed by the mayor for 1 year, and they have no other duties. On instructions from the *barrio* chief, the block chiefs notify the residents in their block if any communal labor is necessary, such as repairs to the water system, road or bridge work, clearing of town boundaries, or work in connection with a fiesta etc., and they see that each person does his duty. Special block chiefs may be named for unusual events such as the taking of the census. Such special block chiefs serve only for the time necessary to complete their special assignment.

632 The *ronda* is a "voluntary" night watch. The
625 town is patrolled every night by a group of 8 to

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575 sciously fostered by some elements in the
794 Church, probably the same groups fostering the
668 Sinarquista movement in the adjoining region
578 of the Bajío north of Tarascan territory.[32] Additional data on the change in attitude of the church in Cherán will be presented under religion.

CONFLICT AND LAW

578 The people of Cherán are very reticent about
[186] conflicts within the town. Efforts are made to convince the outsider that the town is a harmonious unit, and it is very difficult to secure data to the contrary. The impression, after many months in Cherán, is that a great deal of hostility underlies the apparent harmony. In part, this is apparent in the prevalence of witchcraft and some of the evidence is presented under that heading. Interfamily and intrafamily jealousies and conflicts, however carefully concealed, cropped up time and again in casual remarks. Nevertheless, little definite information could be secured. Any efforts to pick up the small leads occurring in conversation were usually adroitly countered. Consequently, the material presented in this section consists primarily of the more overt conflicts which, under certain circumstances, lead to official interference.

578 A great variety of minor conflicts constantly
626 reach the office of the mayor. Many of these never pass the stage of discussion and informal settlement. For example, a man had been drunk all week, insulting people indiscriminately. One man finally struck the drunkard. The case was discussed at length. Some argued that the drunkard should be arrested. Others claimed that both should be arrested. Ultimately, nothing was done, but as anyone present in the *municipio* could enter the discussion, word probably got around to both parties. The drunkard's relatives probably restrained him and the man giving the blows kept out of sight.

695 Another case illustrates the handling of
685 minor offenses. A woman was brought before the acting mayor (the mayor's alternate), charged with stealing a blanket from a man while he was drunk. The woman was accused vigorously by the acting mayor but denied the

[32] Evidence for this statement cannot be given at this time.

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[p.115a] Sierra Tarascans

695 charge with equal vigor. Finally the acting
685 mayor ordered that she be locked up, and, despite voluble protests against injustice, the woman was conveyed forcibly to the jail. The whole procedure seemed very high-handed, but when the woman was out of earshot, the acting mayor turned to me mildly and remarked that he would not have acted that way on the man's word alone but there had been two witnesses and there was no doubt of the woman's guilt. He was trying to frighten the woman into a confession and restitution of the blanket, with which he would be content to dismiss the case.

689 Several drunks on the morning of October 3 created a commotion. Two got into a fight and were locked up. The rest were not molested.

On another day, two women were noticed in the jail. One said the other had thrown a gourd at her head. The second accused the first of stealing something from her lot. They were both thrown in jail to cool off.

627 A little girl was "horsing around"—to use the phrase of Augustín Rangel—near one of the street-corner vendors. The woman told her to go away, but the girl's mother did not interfere. In the mother's absence the girl broke some pottery. The two women began to quarrel and finally went to the mayor's office. After discussion, the woman with the pottery was advised to be more careful of her goods when there were children around.

Three men walked down the street, in various stages of drunkenness. Two began to quarrel and the drunkest of the three picked up a rock and threatened one of the men. The third man interposed himself, talked soothingly, eventually got the rock away from the drunken man, and they continued their walk.

One drunken man kept saying to another "You are rich and can do everything you want and I have nothing." The second man ignored this. After a while the first man said, "I don't care if you are rich, you ——— ——— ———," and then began commenting on the man's mother. The second man said, "Take back what you said about my mother." The first man said, "Never." Then they began to fight. Nothing was done about this.

681 The cases given above represent conflicts which resulted in no official punishment. Con-

681 flicts and illegal acts which brought official action were few (outside of property suits, which are not considered here). The following is the calendar of cases placed on the records from October 9 to December 3.

[683] October 9. A man knocked down a child and hurt her head. He was placed in jail overnight.

681 October 12. A man was drunk and disor-
689 derly. He was placed in jail (no term indicated).

October 15. A man was drunk and disorderly. He was placed in jail overnight.

October 16. A drunken man broke onto a house. He was placed in jail until the eighteenth.

October 22. A woman was "disobedient" (probably disorderly conduct of some sort). She was placed in jail overnight.

681 November 3. A man raped a young woman,
[684] his second offense. He was placed in jail until
[183] the 10th. It should be observed that according to Cherán ideas a properly brought up girl whose parents looked after her as they should would never have been in a situation where rape would be possible.

[685] December 3. A man "abused confidence" by trying to register a piece of land as his own which actually belonged to his mother-in-law. He was put in jail overnight.

The above cases do not include those which involved fines of less than one peso nor cases which came before the judge.

579 Despite the fact that Cherán has a bad reputation in other towns for violence, there seem to be relatively few serious fights. Drunks often fall to fisticuffs, usually ineffective, but knife fights are rare and the use of firearms is even more unusual. In ordinary times there is probably not more than one killing a year. However, a very serious affair occurred shortly before the close of the study.

At a wedding the new priest appeared after the drinking was well under way. He reproved the people soundly for their excessive drinking and urged them to go home. One of the men, who was already very drunk, took the priest's words to heart and started home. Crossing the bridge to the *barrio* of Parícutin, he was shot from ambush and killed. That night the *ronda* went from house to house asking for certain persons, but up to the time the study closed